



Remarks Made by Mayor Jerry Abramson at the Grand Opening of the  
Center for Health Equity  
June 29, 2006

Thank you Dr. Troutman for your innovative leadership of our Health Department and our focus to eliminate health disparities.

I'm glad to be with you today as we breathe new life... and an important new mission... into the historic Hampton House here on Chestnut Street.

It's interesting to note that the prominent German immigrant and tobacco merchant... who built this house in 1887... also owned most of the land on both sides of Broadway from 35<sup>th</sup> Street to Shawnee Park... and was responsible for developing much of West Louisville.

And now... the work that will take place inside this building will enhance the health and wellness for citizens across our community.

This Victorian building, which is part of the Russell neighborhood's "National Register Historic District", has changed hands several times over the past 130 years – it's been a private residence, a multi-tenant building... and even the home of Loretto High School.

The city has owned this building since 1978, when it was purchased the property at a commissioner's sale for the bargain-basement price of \$2,700. It was renovated for the first time in the 1980's and over the years was leased to several tenants.

But I would submit that this building is now filling its highest purpose yet... as our one-of-a-kind Center for Health Equity that will work to ensure every citizen of Louisville has the opportunity to live a healthy life.

We've spent about \$100,000 renovating the interior of this building. And our past two budgets have included the funding to start this center... with the goal of eliminating health inequities in this community.

In Louisville, as in many other large cities, African Americans are more likely to die of chronic conditions - such as heart disease, diabetes, lung cancer and obesity.

The overall mortality rate in Louisville is 28% higher among African-Americans... and we know the statistics are similar for Latinos and new immigrants to this community, who are making up a large part of this community's population growth.

Those statistics are simply unacceptable. We will utilize this center to reach out and educate at-risk populations about the dangers of the diseases and construct intervention programs for residents who show warning signs of these chronic illnesses.

Making Louisville a healthier community is one of my top priorities. All citizens in Louisville deserve the opportunity to live healthy lives... and

have access to quality healthcare... no matter their race, culture or income level.

I thank Dr. Troutman for his leadership and vision on this project. Together with the staff here at the center... headed by our new Health Equity Director Lauri Andress... who you'll hear from shortly... we're looking forward to many successes here.

I would now like to officially declare June 29<sup>th</sup> as the Center for Health Equity Day in Louisville, Kentucky.